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VICE CHAIRMAN JIM SAXTON

PRESS RELEASE

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MOST RECENT JOB GROWTH IS IN WELL-PAID OCCUPATIONS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 80 percent of the net increase in employment over the last year was in occupations that pay relatively well, Vice Chairman Jim Saxton said today. The employment data classified by occupational categories are published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

According to the BLS data, 81.5 percent of the net increase in employment between November 2003 and November 2004 was in two occupational categories with earnings above the median. These two broad occupational categories are management, professional and related occupations; and construction and extraction occupations.

This finding does not mean that every new job in these occupational categories is well-paid, but it does refute the notion that most new jobs are in low-paid occupations. The data are taken from the BLS household survey and are subject to variability on a month-to-month basis.

“Every four years or so there is a surge of interest in a supposed trend toward low-wage hamburger flipper jobs,” Saxton said. “However, the hamburger flipper myth has been an unhelpful diversion from real challenges in economic policy. If this trend had really been in place for the last 20 years, most of us would be flipping burgers by now.

“However, the facts show that most job growth has occurred in occupational categories that pay relatively well. The real policy focus should be on better preparing the work force for jobs that increasingly demand higher levels of training, education, and experience,” Saxton concluded.

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